

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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A PRAYER BY DR. JOSEPH PARKER—THE OUTGOING YEAR

Almighty God, thou knowest why we are in haste, for our days are but a handful, and our breath is dying in our nostrils. Few and evil have been the days of thy servants, yet hast thou given unto us great mercies and gladness, tho we have often turned aside from thy gifts and have not enjoyed the bounty of thy love. Behold our years are hastening away; they fly away on broad swift wings, and we can not tell which way they go, nor can any man find his dead yesterdays. O that men were wise, that they would consider these things, and lend an attentive mind to all thy word, so that their lives might be founded in wisdom, and rise up into all the brightness of hope. God be merciful unto us sinners, and remember not the past against us as an accusation; give us the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which will lead us to better life, that we may treasure our moments with most miserly care and spend them as men who must give an account of their outlay.

We bless thee for the year that is now dying, so full of mercy, tho full of trouble. Thou hast watched us and tended us night and day, and tho our life has been a daily peril and nightly trouble, and thru all hast thou shown thy presence and given proof of thy government and dominion. The Lord overrule all things to happy ends, the Lord pardon his servants thru Jesus Christ, the Priest and Savior of the world, for every sin that has marred their lives; the Lord accept any sacrifice we have rendered, not as a gift of our own, but as expressions of his inspiration.

We bless thee for all thy tender care and thy loving mercy; and as for thy rod, so long and sharp and heavy, we would endeavor to kiss it, and bless the hand that has dealt the stroke. Wherein thou hast taken away from our eyes the beauty which filled them, hast thou not transplanted the flower to fairer climes? Wherein thou hast dug the grave where we least of all would have it dug, is it not that thou mightest wean our love to things worthy of its fire? Help us to see the divine meaning of our life, and to hide ourselves within the ample purpose of God's love and wisdom; may we keep our hearts from sin, and our minds from that aching despair which leaves an open gate for the devil and his angels. May we at all times rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him, knowing that we must not tempt him to our rescue, nor bring about our own purpose by deceitful means.

The Lord give cheerfulness of heart to those who have known long sorrow; the Lord show one small rift in the dark cloud, thru which the morning may be seen—yea, the Lord be tender with his own comfortableness to those who have been long strangers to ought of joy and his delight.

Enable us all to make better vows and to keep them. Permit us all to see the New Year with a higher courage and a nobler faith in God and in his Son. May our motto be,—“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and upon the banner of our life may there be written, “For me to live is Christ.” And grant us thy Holy Spirit, an indwelling guest and friend, to inspire the right thought, to dictate the right word, to show us the right course in life. When the last day comes and the last word is spoken, and the farewell is bidden to a world, by our sin not worth living in, may we have given us an entrance into the city of gardens, the city of light, the mother Jerusalem, the tender one, in whose breast we shall be nursed and nourished for ever. Amen.